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Digital Administrative Services through E-Office in the Regional Secretariat of North Sulawesi Province

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ABSTRACT

This research analyzes the implementation of digital administrative services through E-Office in the Regional Secretariat of North Sulawesi Province. The study uses a descriptive qualitative approach to examine service capability, service optimality, user satisfaction, and determinant factors influencing digital administrative performance. Data were obtained through observation, interviews, and documentation, and analyzed through data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings show that E-Office has improved the management of official documents, dispositions, incoming letters, and outgoing letters by making processes more orderly, faster, and more traceable. Nevertheless, the service has not yet reached optimal quality because of unstable internet connectivity, aging devices, uneven employee competence, dependence on specific operators, limited user access, delayed information updates, and inconsistent standard operating procedure implementation. Users generally feel assisted by the system, but satisfaction remains uneven because document status and completion time are not always clear. The determinant factors include technological infrastructure, human resource quality, system advantages, and procedural consistency. Strengthening infrastructure, continuous training, system improvement, and procedure enforcement are required to create a more effective, efficient, transparent, and accountable digital administrative service.

Keywords: digital administrative service, e-Office, electronic government, public administration, service quality, user satisfaction.

INTRODUCTION

Digital transformation in the public sector has changed the basic orientation of administrative work. Government organizations are no longer expected merely to process documents according to

formal rules; they are also required to provide fast, traceable, accountable, and user-oriented services. In regional government administration, digital transformation has a strategic meaning because internal administrative processes determine the speed of policy coordination, official correspondence, leadership disposition, and public decision-making. When administrative services continue to depend on paper files, manual signatures, and physical movement of documents, the risks of delay, duplication, loss of files, and unclear document status become more significant. Therefore, the implementation of E-Office is not only a technical modernization effort but also part of bureaucratic reform.

The use of E-Office in the Regional Secretariat of North Sulawesi Province is closely related to the national agenda of the Electronic-Based Government System. The policy direction of electronic government emphasizes the use of information and communication technology to create effective, efficient, transparent, and accountable government. However, the presence of an application alone does not guarantee service quality. Digital administrative services require an ecosystem consisting of stable infrastructure, appropriate devices, competent employees, clear standard operating procedures, organizational commitment, and responsive technical support. If one of these elements is weak, digital services may operate formally but fail to deliver the expected level of reliability and user satisfaction.

E-Office has a direct relationship with the management of official documents. In the context of regional government, official documents are not ordinary administrative products; they are legal, organizational, and managerial instruments that support coordination among units, communication between leaders and technical agencies, and the documentation of public decisions. Through E-Office, incoming letters, outgoing letters, official drafts, dispositions, and document expeditions can be processed electronically. The system is expected to reduce unnecessary movement of files, shorten service time, strengthen digital archives, and provide an audit trail for monitoring administrative performance.

The research problem discussed in this research is rooted in the gap between the expected benefits of digital administration and the operational realities found in service practice. E-Office has been implemented and has produced positive changes in the handling of official documents. Nevertheless, the service still faces several constraints, including unstable internet connectivity, aging computers, uneven employee competence, dependence on certain operators, limited access for users, delayed information updates, and inconsistent implementation of procedures. These constraints indicate that digital transformation must be examined not only from the perspective of technology availability but also from the perspective of organizational capability and service governance.

This research aims to analyze digital administrative services through E-Office by focusing on three dimensions: capability, optimality, and user satisfaction. Capability refers to the readiness of infrastructure, human resources, and governance. Optimality refers to the extent to which E-Office improves service speed, document control, workflow integration, and procedural efficiency. User satisfaction refers to the experience of internal users in obtaining clear information, timely service, and reliable document tracking. The research also identifies determinant factors that influence the quality of E-Office services, particularly technological infrastructure, human resource quality, system advantages, and procedural consistency.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Public administration provides the first theoretical foundation for understanding digital administrative services. Public administration can be understood as the management of public

organizations to achieve state objectives through policies, structures, resources, and public services (Panjaitan & Pardede, 2021). Robbins (1983) defines administration as a universal process of achieving objectives effectively through cooperation with and through other people. This view is relevant because E-Office is not only a computer-based application; it is a collective work arrangement that requires coordination among administrative staff, heads of subdivisions, bureaus, and leadership. The success of digital service depends on how the organization manages people, procedures, technology, and authority.

The development of public administration also reflects a shift in paradigms. The Old Public Administration emphasized hierarchy, rules, and procedural compliance, while New Public Management emphasized efficiency, performance, and measurable results. Denhardt and Denhardt (2003) later introduced the New Public Service perspective, which places citizens, public interest, and service values at the center of government work. Although E-Office mainly serves internal users, this perspective remains relevant because internal administrative quality affects the government ability to respond to public needs. A slow disposition process can delay policy responses, while unclear document status can weaken coordination among public agencies.

Public service theory is also important in evaluating digital administration. Public service is a set of activities carried out by government or public organizations to fulfill the needs of individuals or groups according to established rules and procedures (Sinambela, 2017). Ratminto and Winarsih (2007) explain that public service is related to the obligation of government to meet service needs in an equitable and accountable manner. In E-Office services, the users are mainly employees and organizational units, but the principles of clarity, speed, certainty, and accountability remain the same. Administrative services must provide clear procedures, predictable completion time, and accessible information.

The SERVQUAL model developed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry is useful for assessing service quality because it focuses on reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles (Tjiptono & Chandra, 2011). Reliability in E-Office refers to the ability of the system and officers to process documents consistently. Responsiveness refers to the speed of officers in responding to users and solving problems. Assurance refers to the certainty of procedures and the confidence users have in the system. Empathy refers to the support provided to users who have difficulty operating the application. Tangibles refer to the availability of computers, networks, service rooms, and visible service facilities.

Digital-era governance expands the discussion by placing information technology at the center of public sector reform. Dunleavy, Margetts, Bastow, and Tinkler (2006) argue that digital-era governance is characterized by reintegration, needs-based holism, and digitization. In this perspective, technology should not create isolated systems but should integrate workflows and improve the user experience. Janssen and Estevez (2013) emphasize that platform-based governance can help government organizations work more efficiently when digital systems are designed to connect data, processes, and users. E-Office should therefore function as a platform that connects official correspondence, disposition, verification, archiving, and monitoring.

Innovation in public organizations requires more than the introduction of new tools. Osborne and Brown (2005) state that public service innovation depends on institutional support, leadership, resources, and user acceptance. This means that digital administration will be difficult to institutionalize if employees are not trained, if leaders do not consistently use the system, or if procedures remain ambiguous. Grindle's implementation perspective also emphasizes that policy success is influenced by organizational capacity, resources, actor commitment, and implementation

context. The problems of network instability, uneven competence, and inconsistent SOPs can thus be understood as implementation-capacity issues rather than merely technical obstacles.

Regulatory perspectives strengthen the theoretical discussion. Law Number 25 of 2009 on Public Service emphasizes principles such as legal certainty, openness, accountability, timeliness, speed, ease, and affordability. Presidential Regulation Number 95 of 2018 on the Electronic-Based Government System reinforces the obligation to use information technology to create effective, efficient, transparent, and accountable government. Minister of Home Affairs Regulation Number 1 of 2023 on official documents in regional governments provides a normative basis for electronic documents, electronic recording media, and electronic signatures. These regulations show that E-Office has a legal and administrative foundation, not merely a technological rationale.

Based on these theories, digital administrative service quality can be examined through an integrative framework. Capability explains whether the organization has the necessary infrastructure, human resources, and governance. Optimality explains whether the system improves service performance, workflow orderliness, and document control. User satisfaction explains whether the service experience meets user expectations. Determinant factors explain why the service works well or encounters constraints. This framework allows E-Office to be understood as a socio-technical system where technology, people, procedures, and organizational culture interact continuously.

METHOD

This study used a descriptive qualitative approach with an inductive orientation. The approach was selected because digital administrative services are embedded in daily organizational practices and cannot be understood only through numerical indicators. A qualitative design allows the analysis to explore how officers use the system, how users experience the service, how procedures are implemented, and how technical and organizational constraints affect service quality. The study focused on the Administrative Service Unit at the Regional Secretariat of North Sulawesi Province, which handles incoming letters, outgoing letters, leadership dispositions, official document drafts, agenda administration, and document expedition.

Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. Observation was used to understand the workflow of E-Office services, the availability of facilities, and the interaction between officers and users. Interviews were used to obtain explanations from officers and service users regarding infrastructure readiness, human resource competence, governance, system performance, and user satisfaction. Documentation was used to examine employee data, internet provider contracts, SOPs, service flow documents, organizational structure, and visual evidence of service activities. The combination of these techniques enabled triangulation between field experience, institutional documents, and respondent statements.

Data analysis followed the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014), which consists of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification. Data condensation was carried out by selecting and simplifying information relevant to capability, optimality, satisfaction, and determinant factors. Data display was conducted by organizing findings into matrices and thematic tables. Conclusion drawing was performed by identifying patterns, relationships, and meanings across data sources. Credibility was strengthened through triangulation, consistency checks between interviews and documents, and interpretation based on

the theoretical framework of public administration, service quality, and digital governance. See figure 1.

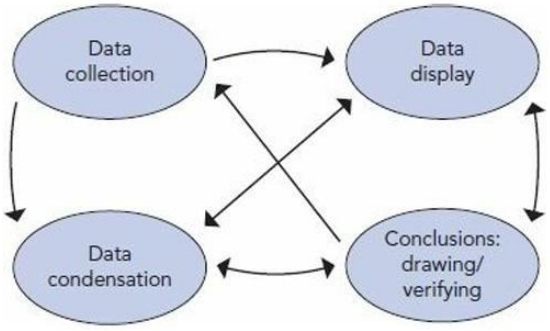


Figure 1. Interactive model of qualitative data analysis
Source: Adapted from Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014)

Organizational and Service Context

The Administrative Service Unit is an important node in the internal bureaucracy of the Regional Secretariat. It supports the flow of official documents from reception to verification, disposition, approval, signature, delivery, and archiving. In this context, E-Office is expected to support the transition from manual document handling to a more integrated and traceable digital workflow. The service is not directly addressed to the general public, but it has indirect consequences for public administration because faster and more accountable internal correspondence can accelerate policy responses and coordination among government agencies.

Organizational data show that the Subdivision for Leadership and Expert Staff Administration has 69 employees with diverse rank categories and educational backgrounds. The number of employees appears sufficient to support administrative work, but digital service quality cannot be assessed only from quantity. The ability to operate applications, update document status, understand electronic official document procedures, and maintain data discipline is more important in digital administration. The data also show that internet provider contracts changed several times in 2025 and 2026. This condition is important because provider transitions can create temporary instability and disrupt digital service continuity.

The service environment is supported by standard operating procedures for different administrative flows, including incoming letters for leadership, incoming letters for bureaus, official document submissions, incoming goods expedition, and outgoing letter expedition. These procedures provide a formal basis for administrative order. However, the existence of SOPs does not automatically ensure consistent implementation. Digital service quality depends on whether officers follow the procedures in daily work, whether access rights are clear, whether document status is updated promptly, and whether leaders and users rely on the system as the main service channel. See table 1, 2, 3 and figure 2.

Table 1. Employees by rank/grade category

Rank/Grade Category	Number of Employees
IVB	1
IVA	1
IIID	1
IIIC	1
IIIB	14

IIIA	5
IID	2
IX	19
VII	1
V	24
Total	69

Source: Administrative data of the General Bureau, North Sulawesi Province

Table 2. Employees by educational background

Educational Background	Number of Employees
Master Degree (S2)	1
Bachelor Degree (S1)/Diploma IV (D4)	40
Diploma III (D3)	1
Senior High School	27
Junior High School	0
Elementary School	0
Total	69

Source: Administrative data of the General Bureau, North Sulawesi Province

Table 3. Internet providers by contract period

No.	Internet Provider	Contract Period
1	ACT NET	January-July 2025
2	Fast Connect	July-December 2025
3	NSP	January-December 2026

Source: Communication and Informatics Office of North Sulawesi Province

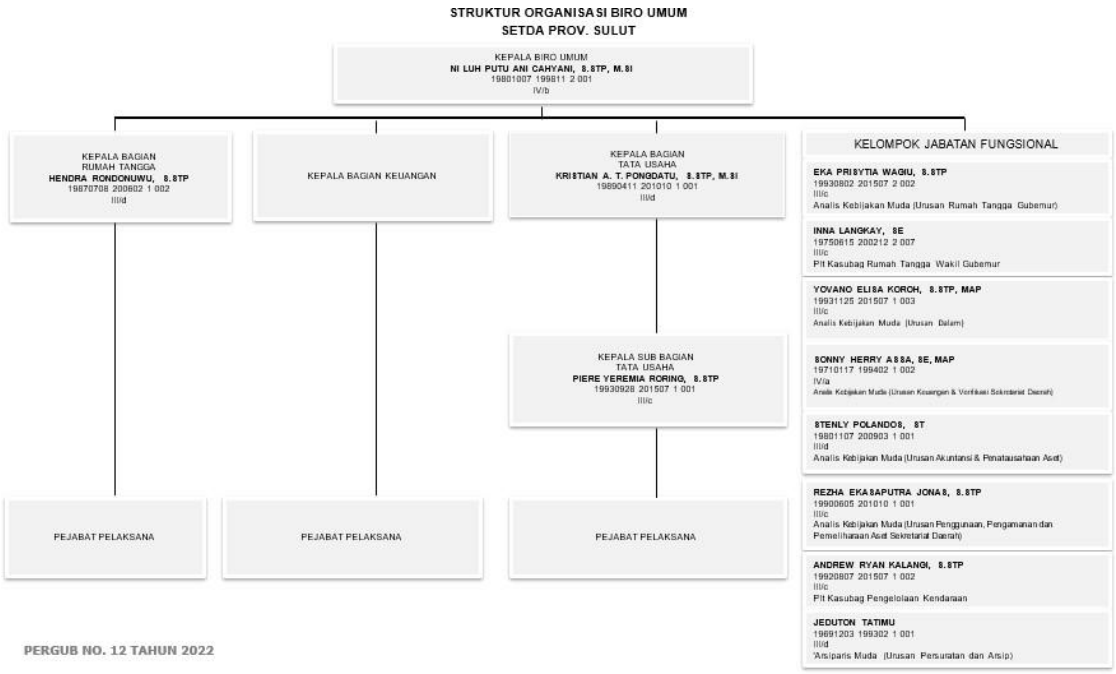


Figure 2. Organizational structure of the General Bureau
Source: Documentation of the Regional Secretariat of North Sulawesi Province

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings indicate that e-Office has been implemented and has produced several positive changes in administrative service. The system has improved the management of official documents, dispositions, incoming letters, and outgoing letters. Documents can be registered more systematically, leadership dispositions can be recorded electronically, and users can receive administrative support more quickly than in a purely manual system. E-Office also creates the possibility of an audit trail, which is important for accountability because it allows the organization to trace when a document was received, processed, forwarded, or completed.

Capability in terms of infrastructure shows a mixed condition. On the one hand, the service unit has computers, application access, service rooms, and basic facilities to support digital administration. The service environment is also relatively organized, and visual documentation shows that officers are able to handle administrative interactions using available devices. On the other hand, network instability remains a serious problem. Digital service depends on internet connectivity, and disruptions immediately affect document registration, verification, disposition, and tracking. Aging devices also slow down work and reduce the reliability of service delivery.

From the SERVQUAL perspective, infrastructure relates mainly to tangibles and reliability (Tjiptono & Chandra, 2011). Tangibles are visible in the availability of computers, service counters, rooms, and applications. Reliability, however, requires the system to work consistently. The findings show that the tangible dimension is relatively present, but the reliability dimension is not fully stable because internet disruptions and old devices still occur. In digital administrative services, reliability is more important than physical availability alone. A computer that exists but cannot access the application smoothly does not fully support service quality.

Human resource capability is another important finding. Several employees have sufficient ability to operate E-Office and understand basic service procedures. They can assist users, process documents, and provide explanations when the system runs normally. However, competence is not evenly distributed across employees. Some officers do not yet understand the system comprehensively, and some users still depend on specific operators to complete digital processes. This dependence creates a bottleneck. If the operator is absent or overloaded, the service slows down even though the application is available.

The uneven competence of employees confirms the argument that public sector innovation requires user acceptance and organizational learning (Osborne & Brown, 2005). Training must not be limited to technical login procedures or basic menu use. It should include electronic official document management, document classification, digital archiving, information security, service ethics, and data updating discipline. In E-Office, the quality of human resources is reflected not only in the ability to operate the system but also in the willingness to use it consistently and to maintain the accuracy of document information.

Governance capability is supported by the existence of SOPs and regulatory references. SOPs define the stages of service and provide a basis for standardization. They are important because digital services require clear workflow rules to avoid different interpretations among officers. Nevertheless, implementation is not always consistent. Some officers still use informal shortcuts, particularly when documents are considered urgent or when technical disruptions occur. This condition indicates a gap between formal rules and operational behavior. In public administration, such a gap can weaken accountability because service outcomes depend on individual habits rather than institutional standards.

The existence of SOPs should be understood as a governance instrument. SOPs must clarify who receives documents, who verifies them, who forwards them, who gives disposition, who updates the status, and who communicates completion to users. If these responsibilities are unclear, E-Office will not eliminate confusion; it may simply transfer manual uncertainty into a digital platform. Therefore, SOPs need to be supported by supervision, periodic evaluation, and clear sanctions or corrective mechanisms when officers fail to update document status or bypass the official workflow. See table 4, 5, 6, and figure 3.

Table 4. Summary of infrastructure capability findings.

Indicator	Empirical Findings
Infrastructure	Facilities generally support digital administration, although network instability remains a recurring constraint.
Infrastructure	Internet disruptions are frequently experienced during service operations.
Infrastructure	Several computers are already old, slowing down application access and document processing.
Infrastructure	Service rooms are available and fairly orderly, but technical support is still limited.
Infrastructure	Network transition between providers can create downtime and service delays.
Infrastructure	Digital service reliability depends strongly on stable connectivity, devices, and technical response.

Source: Field data synthesis

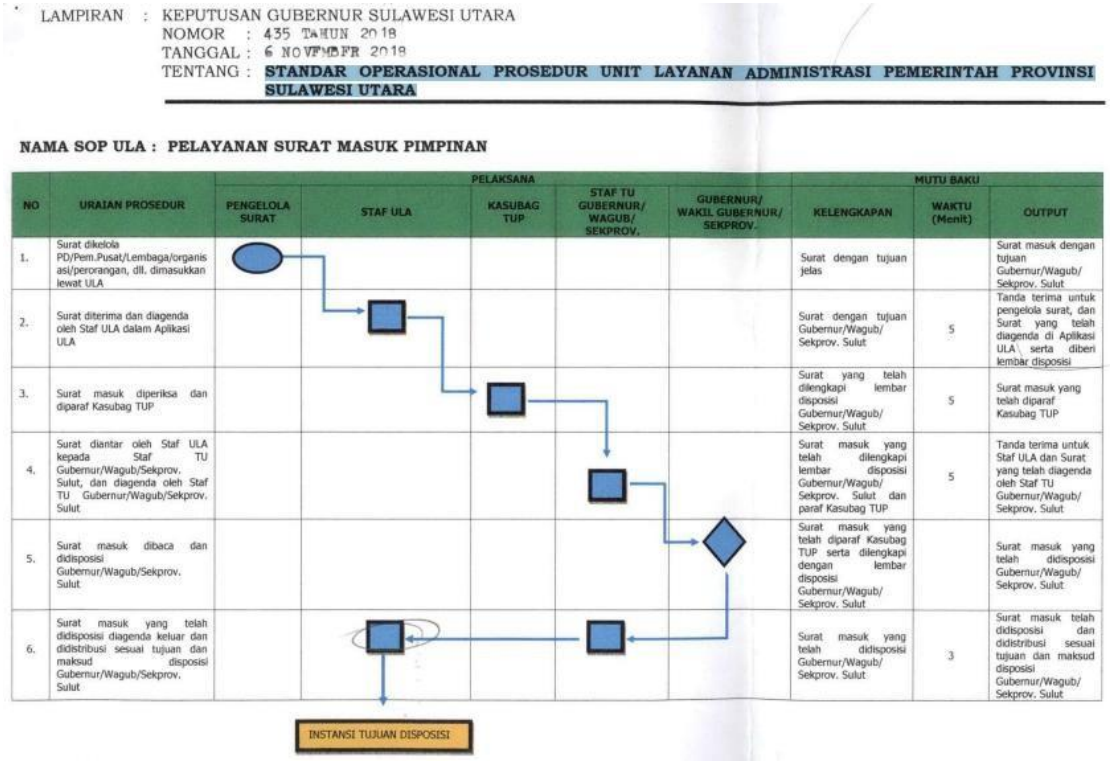
Table 5. Summary of human resource capability findings

Indicator	Empirical Findings
Human Resources	Several employees are able to operate e-Office and understand basic administrative workflows.
Human Resources	Some employees do not yet understand the system comprehensively.
Human Resources	Digital competence is uneven across employees and work units.
Human Resources	Dependence on certain operators creates a bottleneck when the operator is unavailable.
Human Resources	Training is needed not only on application use but also on digital records and service discipline.
Human Resources	User assistance is still necessary because not all internal users are confident with the system.

Table 6. Summary of governance capability findings

Indicator	Empirical Findings
Governance	Service implementation already refers to formal procedures and applicable regulations.
Governance	Some employees do not always follow standard procedures consistently.
Governance	Urgent situations sometimes lead to informal shortcuts outside the digital workflow.

Governance	SOPs help define service stages but require stronger supervision.
Governance	Clearer division of authority and access rights is needed to support accountability.
Governance	A contingency procedure is necessary when technical disruptions occur.



LAMPIRAN : KEPUTUSAN GUBERNUR SULAWESI UTARA
NOMOR : 435 TAHUN 2018
TANGGAL : 6 NOVEMBER 2018
TENTANG : STANDAR OPERASIONAL PROSEDUR UNIT LAYANAN ADMINISTRASI PEMERINTAH PROVINSI SULAWESI UTARA

NAMA SOP ULA : PELAYANAN SURAT MASUK PIMPINAN

NO	URAIAN PROSEDUR	PELAKSANA					MUTU BAKU		
		PENGELOLA SURAT	STAF ULA	KASUBAG TUP	STAF TU GUBERNUR/ WAGUB/ SEKPROV.	GUBERNUR/ WAKIL GUBERNUR/ SEKPROV.	KELENGKAPAN	WAKTU (Menit)	OUTPUT
1.	Surat dikelola PD/Pem.Pusat/Lembaga/organisasi/perorangan, dll. dimasukkan lewat ULA						Surat dengan tujuan jelas		Surat masuk dengan tujuan Gubernur/Wagub/ Sekprov. Sulut
2.	Surat diterima dan diagenda oleh Staf ULA dalam Aplikasi ULA						Surat dengan tujuan Gubernur/Wagub/ Sekprov. Sulut	5	Tanda terima untuk pengelola surat, dan Surat yang telah diagenda di Aplikasi ULA serta diberi lembar disposisi
3.	Surat masuk diperiksa dan diparaf Kasubag TUP						Surat yang telah dilengkapi lembar disposisi Gubernur/Wagub/ Sekprov. Sulut	5	Surat masuk yang telah diparaf Kasubag TUP
4.	Surat diantar oleh Staf ULA kepada Staf TU Gubernur/Wagub/Sekprov. Sulut, dan diagenda oleh Staf TU Gubernur/Wagub/Sekprov. Sulut						Surat masuk yang telah dilengkapi lembar disposisi Gubernur/Wagub/ Sekprov. Sulut dan paraf Kasubag TUP	5	Tanda terima untuk Staf ULA dan Surat yang telah diagenda oleh Staf TU Gubernur/Wagub/ Sekprov. Sulut
5.	Surat masuk dibaca dan didisposisi Gubernur/Wagub/Sekprov. Sulut						Surat masuk yang telah diparaf Kasubag TUP serta dilengkapi dengan lembar disposisi Gubernur/Wagub/ Sekprov. Sulut		Surat masuk yang telah didisposisi Gubernur/Wagub/ Sekprov. Sulut
6.	Surat masuk yang telah didisposisi diagenda keluar dan didistribusi sesuai tujuan dan maksud disposisi Gubernur/Wagub/Sekprov. Sulut						Surat masuk yang telah didisposisi Gubernur/Wagub/ Sekprov. Sulut	3	Surat masuk telah didisposisi dan didistribusi sesuai tujuan dan maksud disposisi Gubernur/Wagub/ Sekprov. Sulut

INSTANSI TUJUAN DISPOSISI

Figure 3. SOP flow for incoming letters addressed to leadership

Optimality of service has improved compared with the manual system. Users experience faster administrative processing, easier document management, and more orderly recording. The system helps reduce dependence on physical documents and supports a more structured administrative flow. However, optimality is still limited by technical disruptions, delayed information updates, limited user access, and internal coordination problems. The service is optimal only when the system works end-to-end: documents are received, verified, forwarded, disposed, completed, and archived without unnecessary manual confirmation.

The system dimension shows that E-Office has clear advantages. It enables document recording, supports digital disposition, and creates a traceable workflow. These advantages are aligned with digital-era governance, which emphasizes integration and user-centered administrative processes (Dunleavy et al., 2006). However, the advantages are not fully realized when the system is slow, when users cannot monitor document status independently, or when information is not updated in real time. Digital governance requires not only digitized forms but also timely and accurate information flows.

User satisfaction is generally positive but uneven. Users feel helped because administrative processes are easier and more orderly than before. They appreciate the possibility of faster document handling and more systematic registration. Nevertheless, satisfaction decreases when users do not know where their documents are, how long the process will take, or whether

additional action is required. This shows that satisfaction is strongly related to certainty. In public service theory, certainty of procedure and time is a core component of quality service (Sinambela, 2017; Ratminto & Winarsih, 2007).

A key issue affecting satisfaction is the continued need for manual confirmation. Users may still ask officers directly about document status because the information in the system is not always updated or not easily accessible. This situation weakens the promise of digital service. The main value of E-Office should be self-service information, where users can monitor progress without depending on personal communication. When manual confirmation remains necessary, the system functions more as a recording tool than as a complete service platform.

The first determinant factor is technological infrastructure. Infrastructure is the basic condition that allows digital service to function. Stable internet, adequate bandwidth, proper computers, secure servers, application maintenance, and technical helpdesk support are all essential. The data on internet provider contracts show that changes in providers can affect service stability. Therefore, digital administrative services need continuity planning, backup connections, and service-level monitoring. Infrastructure should be treated as a strategic asset, not as a routine procurement item.

The second determinant factor is human resource quality. Employees are the actors who translate application functions into service performance. A good system will not work effectively if employees lack competence, motivation, or discipline. Conversely, competent employees can help users overcome difficulties and maintain service continuity even when problems arise. Human resource quality includes technical skills, understanding of official document procedures, responsibility for updating data, ability to communicate with users, and awareness of information security. These competencies must be built through continuous training rather than one-time socialization.

The third determinant factor is system advantage. A system is considered advantageous when it is easy to use, fast, reliable, secure, integrated, and useful for daily work. E-Office already offers advantages in document orderliness and traceability, but it still needs improvement in access, notification, dashboard monitoring, and real-time status tracking. The more the system helps users solve practical problems, the higher the acceptance level will be. If users feel that the system only adds work or does not provide clear information, they may return to manual habits.

The fourth determinant factor is consistency of SOP implementation. SOP consistency bridges technology and organizational behavior. Even the best application requires a clear workflow. The findings show that SOPs are available, but practice is not always consistent. Inconsistent procedures create uncertainty and make service quality depend on individual officers. Strengthening SOP implementation requires leadership commitment, monitoring indicators, internal audits, and clear contingency procedures. When technical disruptions occur, alternative procedures should still preserve digital records and accountability. See table 7 and 8.

Table 7. Summary of service and system optimality findings

Indicator	Empirical Findings
Service Optimality	Administrative work has become faster and more orderly than the previous manual pattern.
Service Optimality	Document processing is simpler because official letters can be created, verified, and tracked through the system.
Service Optimality	Delays still occur because of network disruptions and dependence on a limited number of operators.

Service Optimality	Internal coordination is improved but not yet fully integrated across all units.
System Optimality	E-Office assists document management and creates a traceable digital record.
System Optimality	System use is constrained by limited access, slow updates, and unstable connectivity.
System Optimality	Tracking and notification features need to be strengthened to reduce manual confirmation.

Table 8. Summary of user satisfaction findings

Indicator	Empirical Findings
User Satisfaction	Users feel helped because administrative processes are easier than manual procedures.
User Satisfaction	Satisfaction decreases when document status is unclear or completion time is uncertain.
User Satisfaction	Users appreciate faster processing, but still expect more consistent updates.
User Satisfaction	Manual confirmation is still required in several cases, weakening the perception of digital certainty.
User Satisfaction	Trust in the system increases when officers respond quickly and information is transparent.
User Satisfaction	A more reliable tracking mechanism is needed to improve perceived service quality.

The findings also reveal that E-Office is currently in a transitional phase. The organization has moved from manual administration toward digital administration, but the transformation is not yet fully institutionalized. Transitional symptoms include continued printing of documents, direct confirmation to officers, dependence on operators, inconsistent status updates, and occasional use of informal channels. These symptoms are common in digital reform because technology changes faster than organizational habits. The challenge is to ensure that digital procedures become the normal way of working rather than an optional tool used only by certain officers.

Leadership plays a decisive role in this transition. Leaders must demonstrate that E-Office is the official standard of administrative work. If leaders continue to request manual documents or allow informal channels to dominate, employees will not fully commit to the digital process. Leadership support should be visible in the use of digital disposition, regular monitoring of dashboard indicators, allocation of budget for infrastructure, and enforcement of SOP compliance. Denhardt and Denhardt (2003) emphasize service values, and in this context leadership must translate service values into digital work discipline.

Monitoring indicators are needed to improve service quality. The organization can measure the number of incoming documents per day, average verification time, average disposition time, number of documents exceeding standard completion time, percentage of updated document statuses, number of network disruptions, duration of downtime, and number of manual confirmations requested by users. These indicators can help management identify bottlenecks and evaluate whether E-Office is improving service performance. Without measurable indicators, digital transformation is difficult to evaluate objectively.

Digital archives are another important aspect of E-Office. Official documents do not end when they are delivered or signed; they must be stored and retrievable for future administrative, legal, and managerial needs. Electronic archives require classification, metadata, retention rules,

backup, and access control. If digital archives are not managed properly, E-Office may improve short-term processing but fail to support long-term accountability. Minister of Home Affairs Regulation Number 1 of 2023 strengthens the relevance of electronic documents and electronic recording media, making archive management part of digital service quality.

Information security must also be strengthened. Official documents may contain leadership instructions, personnel information, financial data, policy drafts, or other sensitive information. Digitalization increases accessibility but also increases the need for access control, authentication, password discipline, data backup, and protection against unauthorized use. Assurance in SERVQUAL is not limited to officer politeness; it also includes the confidence that the system is safe and that documents are processed responsibly (Tjiptono & Chandra, 2011).

The continued presence of manual processes should be interpreted carefully. In a transition period, some manual support may still be required for verification, legal formality, or service assistance. However, manual processes should not become the main route for completing digital work. A healthy hybrid approach means that officers may provide face-to-face assistance, but the official record and document flow must remain in the system. This principle ensures that human support strengthens digital service rather than replacing it.

The practical implication of the findings is that E-Office improvement must be systemic. First, infrastructure must be strengthened through stable networks, backup internet connections, device renewal, and responsive technical support. Second, human resources must be strengthened through continuous training, peer mentoring, user guides, and role distribution that reduces dependence on a single operator. Third, the system must be improved through clearer tracking, automatic notifications, dashboard monitoring, and better integration with archives and leadership agenda. Fourth, SOP implementation must be enforced through supervision, evaluation, and regular internal review.

The theoretical implication is that digital administrative service should be evaluated through the interaction of capability, optimality, satisfaction, and determinant factors. Capability explains organizational readiness; optimality explains process performance; satisfaction explains user experience; determinant factors explain the conditions that strengthen or weaken implementation. This integrative framework helps avoid a narrow technological view of e-Office. Digital transformation is not successful simply because documents are processed electronically; it is successful when the electronic process creates certainty, accountability, efficiency, and trust.

The findings further show that internal digital services have external consequences. Although the direct users of e-Office are employees and internal work units, the quality of internal administration influences the speed and quality of public governance. Leadership dispositions that are delayed can slow policy responses. Outgoing letters that are late can delay coordination with other agencies. Incomplete document tracking can weaken accountability. Therefore, improving e-Office is not merely an internal administrative matter; it is part of improving the government capacity to serve the public.

E-Office also supports a culture of evidence-based administration. Digital records can provide information about workload, processing time, frequent bottlenecks, and unit performance. If used properly, these data can support managerial decisions, resource allocation, and procedural improvement. Janssen and Estevez (2013) argue that digital platforms can help government do more with existing resources when data and processes are integrated. The Regional Secretariat can use e-Office data not only for document control but also for service performance analysis.

A major challenge is changing work culture. Employees who have long worked with paper-based procedures may feel more comfortable with printed documents and direct communication.

Resistance may not appear as open rejection but as slow updating, partial use of the system, or continued reliance on manual confirmation. Change management should therefore combine training, leadership example, user support, and gradual enforcement. Employees need to understand that e-Office is not intended to increase administrative burden, but to reduce uncertainty and strengthen accountability.

The documentation of service activities shows that face-to-face interaction remains part of the service process. This is not necessarily negative because users still need guidance, especially when digital competence is uneven. The important issue is whether face-to-face interaction is integrated into digital recording. Officers should assist users while ensuring that the official workflow remains in the application. In this way, human interaction becomes a support mechanism for digital service rather than a return to manual bureaucracy.

Overall, e-Office has created a foundation for more transparent and accountable administrative service. Its positive contributions are visible in more orderly document handling, faster administrative flow, and better potential for tracing documents. However, the system still needs institutional strengthening. Without stable infrastructure, equal competence, consistent SOP implementation, and user-oriented system features, E-Office will not fully achieve its transformational potential. The service must move from basic digitization toward mature digital governance.

Recommendations

The recommended strategy is to strengthen e-Office as an integrated service ecosystem. The government should improve internet stability, prepare backup connections, renew inadequate devices, and ensure responsive technical support. Human resource development should be continuous and equitable, covering application skills, electronic official document management, digital archiving, service ethics, and information security. The system should be improved through tracking features, automatic notifications, dashboard monitoring, and better archive integration. SOP implementation should be supervised, evaluated, and supported by contingency procedures that maintain accountability during technical disruptions. With these improvements, E-Office can become a more effective, efficient, transparent, and accountable digital administrative service.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that e-Office digital administrative services at the Regional Secretariat of North Sulawesi Province have been implemented and have brought meaningful improvements to the management of official documents, dispositions, incoming letters, and outgoing letters. The service has made administrative work more orderly and has created opportunities for faster processing and better traceability. Nevertheless, the service has not yet reached full optimality. Infrastructure problems, especially unstable internet connectivity and aging devices, continue to affect reliability. Human resource competence is uneven, and dependence on certain operators creates service bottlenecks. Governance is supported by SOPs, but implementation remains inconsistent in daily practice. In terms of optimality, e-Office improves speed and orderliness compared with manual procedures, yet it still faces constraints related to technical disruptions, delayed information updates, limited user access, and imperfect internal coordination. In terms of user satisfaction, users generally feel helped by the system, but satisfaction is not evenly distributed because document status is sometimes unclear and completion time is not always predictable. The

determinant factors that influence service quality are technological infrastructure, human resource quality, system advantage, and SOP consistency. These factors interact and shape whether e-Office functions merely as a digital tool or as a genuine instrument of administrative reform.

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